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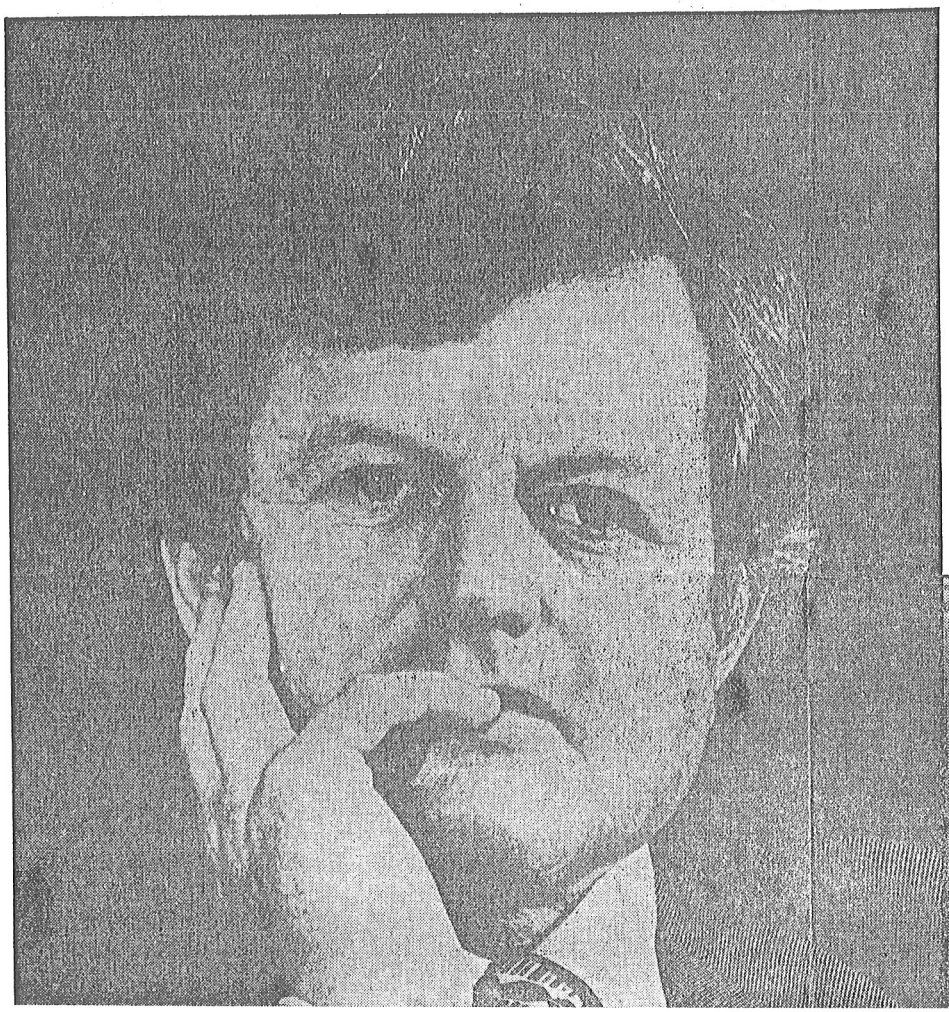
Senator Kennedy, Alone With the Legacy



Dealing Daily With the Issues, the Family, the Gossip . . .And the Lead in Presidential Preference Polls

By Myra MacPherson

BEWARE OF anyone in this town who professes to know what Kennedy thinks," says a close friend of Ted Kennedy. "Everyone is always searching for the 'Charles Kirbo' in his life and there isn't any. He's a loner."

It is Detroit's annual NAACP fund-raiser and Ted Kennedy moves through the corridor and a gray-haired woman in rhinestones and ostrich feathers yells, "Yea Team!" Big, beefy Kennedy, the massive arms looking as if they might burst out of the blue serge at each handshake, grins, moves affably, always affably, through the zillionth Kennedyesque "howah are youahh...nice to see youah."

During the $100-a-plate dinner, Kennedy fiddles with his text, donning the halfglasses he, the 'baby' of the Kennedy clan, now wears at 46. Speech too long. Ruthless excising of prose; some of it his own, some of it the work of wordsmiths such as Adam Walinsky, boy wonder aide to Robert Kennedy a decade ago.

He stands before 7,000, searching for a funny line for the one-or two-minute opener. "I, ah, looked down the program and see that old Kennedy is number 12 in the lineup. That's reverse discrimination." Some laughter. "Even draft choices for GRAMBLING (the predominately black Louisiana university) come earlier than that!" Laughter sweeps the hall.

On to issues. The buzz of conversation stops. He speaks eloquently of the black "casualties" who huddle in our great cities and threaten to become what "America has never known—a permanent underclass in our society." To loud applause he talks of gutting tax loopholes, getting unmarried black mothers out of the welfare trap, providing national health insurance for all. "No family, waking in the night, should have to face the INHUMAN choice as to whether their child is $50 sick. . .or $100 sick."

"He has nobody to talk to. . .he had a tremendous admiration for Dad. He was very close to Jack in a different way. Jack adored having him around, got a vicarious pleasure out of Teddy's doing things he couldn't do. . .With Bobby, he had the same thing he did with Dad. Teddy depended on his judgment...It's hard to find a substitute for Bobby. . ." Kennedy's sister Jean Smith, nine years ago.

Today, Ted Kennedy seems the compleat senator—dedicated, effective, attractive. The man who, despite a muddled private life, is a favorite presidential hope in poll after poll, year after election year. The latest Gallup Poll shows him beating them all—Carter, Brown, Reagan, Ford. It is an altogether perfect picture.

See KENNEDY, M2, Col. 1

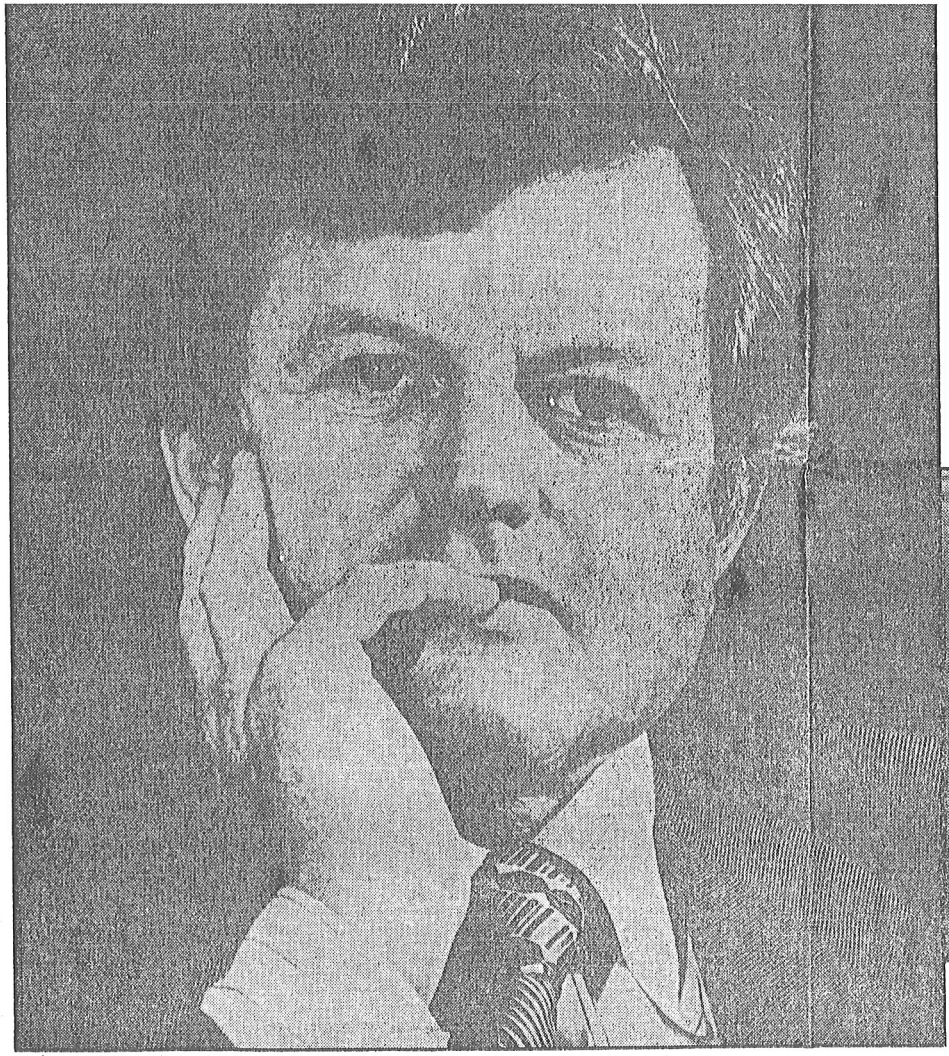


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Photo at left by the Christian Science Monitor; above, by Associated Press

Today, the possible presidential candidacy of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, left, is the subject of much discussion; in May of 1967, the same kind of speculation was focused on Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Whom Do the Commies Support? We'll Back the Others

By Art Buchwald

IT IS SAD to think that the Cold War is heating up again just at the time President Carter is working on a new tough image.

"We've got to do something to stop the Soviets in Africa," Feebleman said, "before it's too late."

"Who says so?"

"The guy whose name I can never

rebels, and our guys are supporting the people's liberation forces."

"No, you're wrong," I told Feebleman. "The people's rebels are on

as the place was liberated Mobutu's Army went in and pillaged and raped the same people. Pillage and rape are not the criteria on which we should base our support."

"Hardly," I said. "Carter isn't about to send Americans into Africa at this time."

"Well, if the Soviets are using Cubans as mercenaries, we should find a country to do the same thing for us,"

bes on our side before we give Carter a chance to use his power to thwart the tribes on their side."

"Let's call what's-his-name, the president's national security adviser, and ask him to give us the names of people

Ted Kennedy, Dealing With the Issues, the

KENNEDY, From M1

And then it happens. As a former Kennedy aide says, "all it takes is one incident and it all comes back again." This time, the lights go out, with one small spotlight on singer Billy Eckstein, just as Kennedy is hustling out of the Detroit NAACP dinner for the airport. As the room blackens there is a quick shift in the mood. . . thoughts race uncontrollably. . .Dallas and the motorcade. . .Los Angeles and the crumpled body in the kitchen corridor of the Ambassador Hotel. . .Suddenly, police, aides, strangers link arms, cordoning off a phantom foe, pushing, shoving. "Get him out of here! Keep moving, keep moving," mutters a nervous male reporter, paling. Only as Kennedy reaches the bright lights of the corridor does everyone relax.

At the airport, day's work done, Kennedy piles into a small charter jet. He asks the dignitaries seeing him off, "Would you like a pop?" and makes the motions of pouring a drink. As wind whips down the runway, everyone—Republican Michigan Gov. William Millikin, Sen. Robert Griffin, a judge, an aide, reporters—join the senator in a moment's bonhomie. The joshing consists of those forgettable nothings of male clubbiness. . .Griffin jokes about being a Republican hitching a ride with liberal Democrat Kennedy. . .A black judge tells Kennedy's black aide, "I caught some Baptist preaching in that speech. Was that you, brother? ". . .Ice rattles in plastic cups. . .Kennedy, with the broad hands and face of an Irish peasant and his graying curls, throws his head back, laughs. . . .

The Classic Smokescreen

"What do I think about Joan's move to Boston? I don't know if it's helped the marriage, but it sure has helped HER. She got away from Washington and all the Kennedys. She's at home up here. Who can tell about their future? Who can tell about any couple's future?" A Boston friend.

Airborne out of Detroit, the eloquent phrases, the easy banter disappear as Kennedy faces an interview. He looks down, mumbles, picks at the hair on his wrist, jiggles the ice in his gin and tonic. He speaks in a celebrated nonsentence shorthand that causes seasoned political reporters to blanch when they examine their notes after a Kennedy interview.

Has he ever given any thoughts of leaving politics? "Well, uh, I, ah, I mean, I have never really, oh, you know, you always say. . .well, I don't, I mean, I've never really thought. . .well, about that."

Even when he talks about issues, the fits and starts are there, followed by a sudden burst of clarity before he trails off in mid-sentence. It is the classic Kennedy smokescreen; the fighter circling away from the left hook, protecting, revealing little of himself.

Compassion and Arrogance

"There are two Ted Kennedys. The pre-1968 Kennedy with a terminal case of adolescence and the post June 5, 1968, Kennedy. For all practical purposes, he had a nervous breakdown the summer of '68 after Bobby was killed," says a longtime Boston pal. "He disappeared on a yacht; didn't want to come back. That was followed a year later by the 'other thing'. . .and then he was just devastated, incredibly, by what happened to his son. With his increased vulnerability, he is really a much different and caring person."

Kennedy, as with most complex and achieving people, embodies a number of contradictions. He can be curt and abrasive, or gentle and compassionate, depending on the person doing the reflecting. Despite the tragedies that shaped him and at times overwhelmed him, he retains an abiding droll humor. In Boston the other night he decided to go into the Boston Bruins' dressing room after they had just lost the Stanley Cup playoffs. Wallowing in defeat, the hockey players paid no attention to anyone. Kennedy soon left, saying, a friend recalls, "Gees, I don't know why I went in there in the first place. They're all *CANADIANS* anyway."

The memories of an arrogant manboy do linger in this town—the imperious snap of fingers to alert an aide during hearings, the at-times sneering questioning of witnesses, the expectation that people were there to serve him. An ex-Foreign Service officer has an indelible remembrance of the way Kennedy "treated me like s...," when he was assigned to escort the senator through a foreign country several years ago, bellowing at him profanely when the recalcitrant phone system went amok, sticking him with a $70 lunch tab.

Some colleagues still grumble that Kennedy can appear heroic on issues because he can afford it. They stoned him and carried "impeach Kennedy" signs in Boston when he championed busing, but he is still undefeatable in a Catholic state that continues to canonize Kennedys. And he can, as one congressman said, "always clip his daddy's coupons."

But now, more than ever, the overwhelming view is that Kennedy has grown up. He is regarded as one of the best and most powerful senators. Conservative colleagues who seldom vote with him on social issues nonetheless praise his diligence, voracious homework, mastery of complex legislation. Some also scoff at him as an out-of-step big government spender. Many liberals and progressives, on the other hand, in a time labeled neo-conservative, hail him as willing to champion tough social causes that have silenced other senators.

"He's looked on as an effective leader because he works as hard as hell on issues, he's interested in very controversial issues others refuse to face—tax reform, health care, human rights. He hasn't won a lot of those fights but he's kept everyone alert on tax reform, kept airline deregulation and health care in focus," says Sen. James Abourezk.

Winning Enemies

Kennedy's office is a mass of memorabilia— Bobby Kennedy and his dog poster. . .Jack sailing. . .a Jackie Onassis painting. . .tons of Kennedy kids photos. . .posters with uplifting cliches, "the entire ocean is affected by a pebble. . . ."

It is springtime and with it comes the annual invasion of student trips on the Hill. Kennedy sees several a week. One day he is entertaining a half dozen ninth graders from Pinecobble School, a private Massachusetts academy. "Kennedy is pretty big stuff to see" whispers one student before the senator arrives with a brisk "howah are youah? Anyone from Massachusetts around here?" Big grin. Shows off the pictures of "my children." Points to a scrawled and framed note from "my son Teddy years ago, in 1969." Teddy, 8, was mad because his father had wandered into unspecified areas of schoolwork. It says, "you are not ascing me questungs about the five pages. You are not creting (grading) my homework. It is a free wrold." Kennedy laughs and repeats, "It's a free wrold," then says "Any misspelled words there?" This time, the students laugh. He starts peppering them with questions. . ."Where did Melville live?" "Who was the greatest clipper ship maker?" "Any good skiiers out where you're from?" The teacher starts their questions, the kids join in. Above all, as a private institution, they want to know what he thinks of the tuition tax credit. It is not the right answer. "I'm opposed to it."

Kennedy is not half bad at winning enemies—among big business as he pushes tax reforms; among the AMA as he hammers away (for a decade) for national health insurance. He is unloved by the Teamsters as he moves toward legislation to halt rate-making practices in the trucking industry that adversely affect "the price of nearly everything we buy—from a can of peas to a TV set."

One day last month, face turning red with anger, he shouted—for the benefit of the congressional record—in a near empty Senate chamber, blasting the administration's "back door" economic and military support of Chile. He denounced leading U.S. banks giving private loans to a country whose government is built on "mass jailings, torture and executions."

And sometimes Kennedy catches it from his own family. Sister Eunice Shriver gave him hell when he voted to fund Medicaid abortions. He chuckles at the family anger over his support of tax reform proposals to do away with the three-martini lunch, business entertainment and other forms of "expense-account living."

"I just tell them it may be fortunate for them we haven't got the votes, yet," he says with a broad grin. "It really is amazing—for example, 45 percent of all Yankee season tickets are business deducted." There are $240 million lost annually to the Treasury through business-deducted tickets to sports events, according to Kennedy. Pleasure jaunts to sporting events should not be charged off as tax-deductible business expenses, he says. He chuckles again. "I just wrote the IRS to monitor the private corporate jets going into the Kentucky derby."

Master of Accommodation

"I feel a certain pride. You don't have to be ashamed of him; defend him. In the old days it was 'there's that f....ing little Teddy, going to run for Senate and it's going to hurt the president," says a Washington political observor who was a close friend of Jack Kennedy's. "Well, he decided to get in there and work his ass off."

Jack Kennedy was already at Choate when Ted was born. "Can I be godfather to the baby?" Jack wrote home. Chubby, cheerful Teddy, who was "always willing to put up the boat" for his older brothers, a generally unmemorable student, shifted and shunted to no less than 10 schools before college—a child alternately spoiled and overlooked.

Political historians have tried to analyze what that all meant, including the trauma of being placed at age 8 in a class with boys four years older as a tag-along with brother Bob, then 14. It was during the war, father Joe was ambassador to England, his mother "had no other place for him," according to biographer James MacGregor Burns.

"You wonder if the mother and father aren't quite tired when the ninth one comes along," Rose once mused. "I had been telling bedtime stories for 20 years."

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Robert, Edward and John Kennedy

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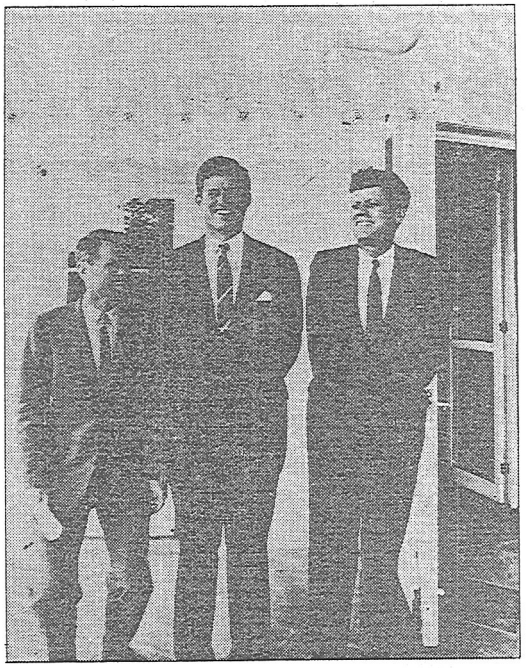

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There is, of course, one question always in the air—Kennedy's private life. His sister, Eunice Shriver, gets asked about it when she visits Bogota, Colombia. So does his wife, Joan, now living in Boston. And so do Kennedy, his aides, friends and the women he is often romantically linked with in gossip columns.

There is this general public feeling, no matter how unfair, that, since Chappaquiddick, the world is entitled to know all. The answer from everyone, to date, is that he and his wife have not, nor are they planning to, separate. Model Suzy Chaffee, a former Olympic skier dubbed Suzy Chap Stick in TV commercials, skis with Kennedy but says, "We're not having an affair."

Joan says, "I'm a music lover and I told Ted I wanted to study in Boston and he told me, 'Go on. Go out, have a good time.' I'm not going to sit home."

For years Joan Kennedy searched unsuccessfully for a niche in the competitive Kennedy world. She once said, "They're so good at everything and I'm a flop." Asked how she would describe herself, she spoke with one-word clarity: "Vulnerable." When her eldest son Ted, now 17, was stricken with cancer five years ago, it was a final shattering blow. She sought psychiatric therapy for her emotional stress and problems with alcohol.

"Moving to Boston last September was the best thing that happened to her. She's doing extraordinarily well. I don't see them divorcing; they are both extremely concerned about the children and they know a divorce would hurt them," says a close friend.

"Teddy, for all his running around, is still a Catholic who believes in the institution of marriage and, genuinely, respects Joan. She is dedicated to him—even though she must wish at times that she could feel otherwise. His flings are all with 'cutie pies.' It's incredible. He commands this professional respect, but he's back in kindergarten when it comes to 'boy-girl' relationships."

His male friends often joke about Kennedy's alleged escapades which are taken for granted, and one theorized, "In some strange way, it's as if he's trying to make a point. I think he feels imprisoned in that heavy role of the last remaining Kennedy male." Another simplifies it to the behavior of a "typical Irish male chauvinist. I wonder if he's ever really had a conversation with a woman."

Kennedy himself reddens, seems both angry and embarrassed, at any reference to his private life.

For the first time in an interview, Kennedy goes off the record to say, essentially, that after all he's been through he has learned to ignore gossip. He will talk only in abstracts about the problems of putting a family life together in the glare of political life. "It's very difficult. It's *TERRIBLE*." In an oblique reference to his wife he says Washington is a special curse for "some sensitive people."

He looks down, speaks in snatches. "I spend an awful lot of time with the kids...We have a close relationship...It is important I be there...and that I'm not on the national scene, not running...The rest of these things are so important...they're finding themselves." Does he give them advice about all the things written about the family? "Well, uh, I talk to them about it. I talk to them about all kinds of things. They are very good...remarkable...."

When in town, Kennedy works his schedule to have dinner with his three children and is unstintingly a regular feature at the countless graduation exercises of nieces and nephews. When one of Ethel's children graduated from Putney, he chartered a plane, loaded it up with Kennedy brothers and sisters and then at Putney, where celebrities are studiously ignored, sat in the sun on a hill, through it all, for five hours.

Two-Way Street

"It's been said that others read the books experts write—and Kennedy talks to the authors. A couple of times a month he brings in outside experts —Walter Heller or a Brookings whiz or an expert in any field—and they'll have dinner and kick issues around." A Kennedy aide.

Kennedy, a quick study, likes to assimilate through briefing, rather than reading. Aides, considered among the best on the Hill, arrive at his McLean, Va., home at 7:30 many mornings to brief him before hearings. Working for Kennedy is demanding but rewarding his aides say.

"There is none of this junior staff filtered through a senior staff," says one aide. "Sure, you have to catch him on the fly, but Kennedy feels strongly that the way to get and keep excellent people is to give them access. No one good wants to work for another *AIDE* to Kennedy—they want to work for Kennedy."

As Kennedy moves around the Hill, he is obviously at home. He chairs endlessly boring hearings, stifling yawns, a picture of repressed energy as he twirls his glasses or fiddles with his pen, then cuts through testimony with inside baseball jokes that no visitors understand but laugh at anyway. Barreling down corridors, often lost in thought, Kennedy is seldom approached by aides, senators or visitors unless he indicates by slowing down, or a quick smile, that he welcomes it.

When strangers move close with a questioning, "Sen. Kennedy...?" there is a barely perceptible stiffening, a drawing back. But Kennedy today is nothing like he was immediately following the assassination of his brothers when he would sit in his office and jump at the raucous buzz of quorum calls. Aides and friends resorted to macabre jokes such as, "If it comes, Ted, it's not going to sound like a quorum call," to kid him out of his edginess.

See KENNEDY, M3, Col. 1

. . . And the Lead in the Presidential Preference Polls

KENNEDY, From M2

Although Carter started his term as no friend of Kennedy—and one politician said, "There is still an irrational fear in this administration that somewhere there is this well-oiled Kennedy machine ready to rise up and clobber them"—Kennedy has, ironically become the president's point man in the Senate.

Some Kennedy friends say he privately despairs about the administration and there are occasional defections—voting against the jet sale to the Middle East, for example. But Kennedy is more often the loyalist who will drag his friend Abourezk out of a hearing to persuade him to vote for the Panama Canal treaty. "Kennedy was convinced a defeat would be terrible, not only for Carter but for the party," said Abourezk.

Pennsylvania Avenue, of course, is a two-way street and good scout Kennedy now has a growing voice in administrative dealings.

Kennedy recalls, "I gave Stu Eizenstat all kinds of hell," after one Carter lunch concerning tax reform. "I said, 'Well the administration might as well send up all the reforms—because if you don't *I'm* going to offer them anyway—and you might just as well get the credit.'" Carter's package, Kennedy says, just so happened to become a "good one."

"I've never seen Kennedy walk away from an applauding audience," says Illinois Rep. Daniel Rostenkowski, who characterizes the tax reform as heavy-handed and ineffective and sees a measure of grandstanding in Kennedy's actions. The representative was not happy. "After Califano and I advised the president on the health issue—I don't think it's going anywhere up here—Kennedy goes in and apparently fills Carter with the idea of the possibility of enactment."

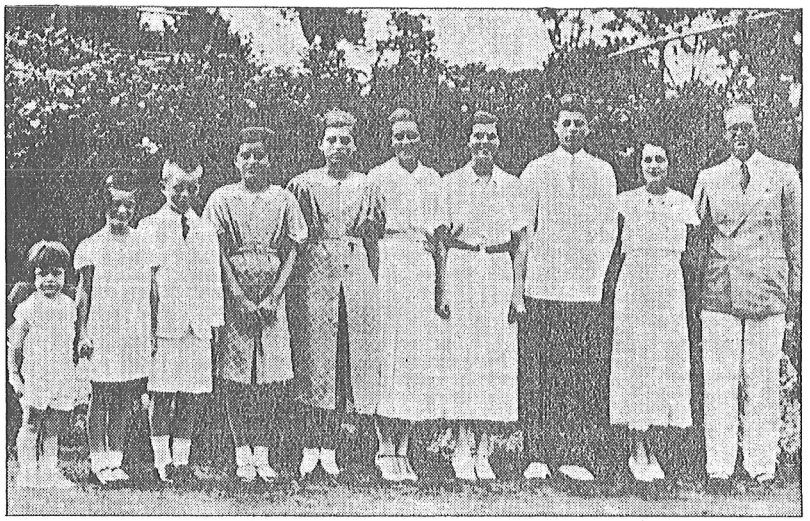
As the leading congressional backer of far-reaching health insurance, Kennedy is allied with labor in pushing for a broader coverage than HEW endorses. In a recent heated exchange at the White House, Kennedy blasted an HEW memo to cabinet officers as an "unfair distortion of our proposal. A *CHILD* could comment negatively on HEW's representation of what is *ALLEGED* to be our plan. That paper effectively closes the door on our proposal." A conciliatory president said he wanted to be fair. "How long before you, Ted, could give me the corrections, so I can get them to cabinet officers?"

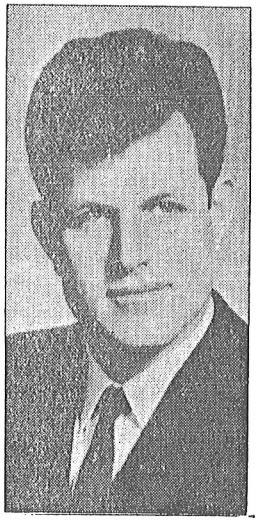
Kennedy shrugs and skillfully uses his interviews to stress that if the administration doesn't "deal with the elderly, the poor, the unemployed in a comprehensive way, then I'm going to oppose it."

Ignoring the Ifs

"You've got to STAND for something! Obviously he's been for fiscal restraint in California and he's aggressive—but he's gonna have to speak up about industrial areas, agricultural areas." Ted Kennedy on California Gov. Jerry Brown.

There is visible contempt when Kennedy speaks of Brown, the other Democrat considered a possible threat to Carter. Kennedy "fully expects" Brown will run in 1980. How does he feel about that? The look is one of an elephant stepping on an ant. "That doesn't bother me." Kennedy brushes aside all the "ifs"—if Carter doesn't run, if Carter looks in trouble..."I expect him to run and I am going to support him."





The Kennedy family in 1934: from left to right, Edward, Jeanne, Robert, Patricia, Eunice, Kathleen, Rosemary, John, Rose and Joseph; right, Teddy Kennedy as a young senator.

Coalitions

"Chappaquiddick? It's not like people forget, it's just that time goes on. I don't think it would be a problem." A young black at Detroit's NAACP dinner. "Kennedy for president? Hummph," says the Wyoming visitor to the Capitol, pursing his lips. "I don't care how good a senator he's become, his personal performance tells all. He's not presidential material."

The haters, says a Kennedy friend, will never forget. One friend and Boston newspaperman recounts a telling incident: Fifteen antibusing pickets greeted Kennedy last week in the Dorchester section of Boston, the home of the working class. He pushed through, saying nothing. Inside 300 people, all greatly embarrassed by the pickets, were horrified when, as Kennedy started to speak, a man burst through a side door, yelled, "Kennedy, you're a killer! We're not gonna forget Chappaquiddick," then ducked out.

Kennedy looked straight ahead in the silence. "Well!" he said, "Are the Bruins going to win tonight?" The room erupted in applause. After his speech, someone in the audience yelled, "Come and sit down, Ted." He said, "I will—if I can have a beer." He grinned and said, "After what happened tonight have you got anything stronger?" There was easy laughter and it was a time for posing with Kennedy and asking "How's your mother?" and other such neighborly things.

"For a guy who had nothing but wealth, he's very good with those who make $18,000 and under. He's comfortable with them and they are with him. You should have seen him with his driver, Jack Crimmins, straight out of Southie; he used to battle with Kennedy all the time about busing 'the niggers.' When he died, Kennedy delivered the eulogy and it was one of the few times people saw him weep openly in public. He genuinely loved old Crimmins." A friend.

Not all the views are as warm. Some liberals criticize him for playing coalition politics too well, shaping overly compromised legislaton. The wedding of Kennedy and arch conservative, the late John McClellan, for example, in revamping the criminal code is viewed by some civil libertarians such as ACLU's John Shattuck as creating 'dreadful' law-and-order provisions. Kennedy impatiently says,"Shattuck is WRONG."

And feminists are wary of Kennedy. "He has a great gut-level understanding of how terrible it is to be POOR—but he doesn't understand that the majority of these poor are women," says a woman lobbyist. "When you talk to him on women's issues he's impatient. He's fine in the health field except in the area of women's issues. He won't push for abortion coverage in national health insurance—and women will be worse off than they are now."

"There's power there, in that chairmanship. Anyone who wants a judgeship knows he is going to have to be as nice to Kennedy as he has been to Eastland," says one political observor.

Kennedy will become chairman of the Judiciary Committee when Sen. James Eastland resigns at the end of this term and Kennedy seems positively bouyant about the prospect, says he's looking forward to shaping it into a more liberal and active committee. Conservative Republicans on the committee hardly take kindly to that thought. Kennedy argues that it is the conservatives, not him, who are out of step. "It is ironic that so many who call themselves fiscal conservatives are actually the last of the big-time spenders in Congress. They oppose increased spending for domestic programs, but are often the first to endorse costly new federal subsidies through the tax laws.

"I'm not sure this is an especially imaginative and creative time in Congress. I think it's just the confusion members have in striking the senses of people back home. I find people very responsive to the issues I believe in—jobs, education, decent housing, health, concern for the elderly." Nixon throttled the Great Society programs to the extent they were "never given a chance," he argues.

"There really is too often timidity," among his colleagues. He looks disgusted. "Take D.C. representation! It should have passed years ago."

The Old-Guard Liberals

"He clearly paid a tremendous price to become his own person. That he could finally go on with his own career with diligence perhaps made him more sure of himself, more reflective. There has been a gradual steeling from within." A former aide.

Asked why he works so hard, why he just doesn't forget it all and quit, Kennedy pauses for some time before answering. "That's a complex question. I'm still a strong believer," there is another long pause, "in the political process, in spite of all the frustrations. There has probably been a deepening of my own priorities in terms of issues and values." He seems embarrassed. "A sense of growth and, uh, caring."

"Because of Carter, people are looking for star quality again. Kennedy is the last of the old-guard liberals—with old solutions to old problems— as opposed to the new 'stingy' liberals like Gary Hart and Biden and Dukakis who see the need for government support of social issues but not to the same extent. There are still plenty of the old-line liberals out there, though, and Kennedy gets them *AND* the Wallace blue-collar types," says an aide to another liberal senator.

"By not being able to lay the presidential talk to rest, he has an added dimension of national constituency. He's all over the place—Mississippi, Alabama, Detroit—giving speeches. Tip O'Neill said recently, 'Everywhere I go, Kennedy's been there before me.'"

Still, a life as a powerful senator, in a way, eases Kennedy out of the dilemma and ambivalence that have plagued him since the death of Bob Kennedy a decade ago, when Ted Kennedy told a shattered country that he had picked up "the fallen standard." That role would satisfy his sense of duty and commitment, would be a respectable alternative to running for the office he has looked on with some reluctance.

"We are making progress on some of the important issues I have worked on for years—for the first time we're having a major debate on health insurance and all these issues and chairing the Judiciary is about as full a plate...As I look down the road it fills up my full range of interests and abilities for any foreseeable period of time. You know when Bobby was in the U.S. Attorney's office and then he was an investigator and all, my father was always saying, 'Are you going to move to Maryland or Virginia, stay in Massachusetts?' You know, kind of make long-range plans...and he never made any determination...and things go on and the future sort of took care of itself, you know. And I, uh, I just see the opportunity in terms of the Senate now as virtually unlimited."

He paused. "I just think the future will take care of itself."

Still, the Speculation

In the bars where politicos gather and in Washington the talk is more and more of Kennedy these days. "Well, what if Carter DOESN'T run?" "That pissant Brown....Kennedy wouldn't possibly let him take it...." "I've got the perfect plan...What if he accepts the vice presidency with Carter? That'd get him off the hook as a loyal Democrat...It would lessen the threat of, you know, some nut...." "Naww, Carter wouldn't stand for a Kennedy running mate...." "Oh, don't be so sure...."

And so it goes.